The MYTH Of the VANISHING PEREGRINE

A study in the manipulation of public and official attitudes

F.L.Beebe

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A Study in the Techniques

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By Frank L. Beebe

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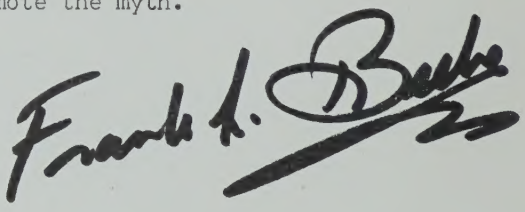

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In the September 1970 issue of "The California Condor", a small publication dedicated to the protection and appreciation of the Birds of Prey and published at Pacific Palisades in Southern California, two different but closely associated articles were printed. The first of these appeared under the heading of "A Federal Research Program for Endangered Birds of Prey" and was authored by Dr. Ray C. Erickson of Patuxent Research Center of Laurel, Maryland, U.S.A. The second was a kind of footnote to the lead article, the author not listed, but which terminated as follows: "We insist that the taking of nestlings and the trapping or possession of adult birds (referring here to peregrine falcons) is severely depleting a species already faced with serious environmental problems."

The placing of this footnote in relation to the lead article was no accident. The strident repetition of this kind of anti-falconry propaganda (for that is what it is) has gone too far and has been continued for too long a time. It is my intention, therefore, in the text which follows, to show that the alleged "endangered status" of the peregrine falcon is a myth created and perpetuated for the specific purpose of halting any further growth of falconry in North America immediately, and of stopping it altogether eventually, this being done from behind a carefully erected screen against which, in purest white and deepest black, a carefully rehearsed puppet-show is being presented to attract and influence both public and official attention.

The myth of the vanishing peregrine has been built around a noticeable reduction in the number of nesting pairs of this falcon in two rather small regions of the world. This decline in these regions is well documented and is not questioned. That the reasons for the declines are known, however, or that this falcon as a species, continent-wide and world-wide, is declining at all, let alone declining to the point of becoming "endangered" is questioned, and insofar as the populations of the Canadian arctic and Canadian pacific coast are concerned, is denied.

When Hal Webster and I published "North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks" in 1960 Webster was well aware of the declining eastern North American population of peregrines, as were all falconers living in that region. This was some five years before the highly publicized "World Conference" on the peregrine falcon at Madison, Wisconsin, and the text for publication in our book had been written at least three years prior to being published. Webster even postulated the possible reason for the final and rather abrupt disappearance as being possibly due to contamination by DDT which was at the time being very heavily utilized over much of the region for the control of Dutch elm disease.

The conference at Madison that purported to prove the connection between the disappearance of the peregrine in this region and pesticide contamination is now history. It was attended by some of the leading names in North American wildlife conservation and protection. The contributors of the information at this conference were not, however, any of these. Except for some of the contributors from Europe the information came primarily from falconers. The stated purpose of the conference was to document the population and breeding status of the peregrine falcon world-wide, and this was acclaimed and has now been officially accepted as having been done. It was not done. A very small beginning was made - nothing more.

International Peregrine Conference, Madison, Wisconsin, 1965

Conference Chairmen:

Dean Amadon, American Museum of Natural History, New York.

John L. Buckley, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Roland C. Clement, National Audubon Society (U.S.A.).

Fredrick N. Hamerstrom, Jr., Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

H. G. Geyer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service.

J. J. Hickey, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin.

Robert A. McCabe, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wis.

Roger Tory Peterson, Old Lyme, Connecticut.

Gustav A. Swanson, Department of Conservation, Cornell University.

Participants

Daniel W. Anderson, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wis.

Richard C. Banks, Natural History Museum, San Diego, California.

Frank L. Beebe, Provincial Museum, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Daniel D. Berger, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Tom J. Cade, Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell.

James H. Enderson, Department of Zoology, Colorado College, Colorado.

Richard Fyfe, Canadian Wildlife Service, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Kenneth E. Gamble, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wis.

Frances Hamerstrom, Plainfield, Wisconsin.

Mrs. Richard A. Herbert, Middletown, Delaware.

Helmut C. Mueller, Department of Zoology, University of North Carolina.

Morlan W. Nelson, Boise, Idaho.

James N. Rice, Berwyn, Pennsylvania.

James E. Roelle, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wis.

Earl C. Schriver, Jr., Baden, Pennsylvania.

Chas. R. Sindelar, Jr., Wisconsin State University, Stevens Point, Wis.

Walter R. Spofford, New York Medical Center, Syracuse, New York.

Alexander Sprunt, National Audubon Society, U.S.A.

Robert M. Stabler, Department of Zoology, Colorado College, C. Springs.

Lucille F. Stickel, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland.

William H. Stickle, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland.

Daniel O. Trainer, Department of Veterinary Science, University of Wis.

Clayton M. White, Department of Zoology, University of Utah, Salt Lake.

Howard F. Young, Department of Biology, Wis. State University, LaCrosse.

Hans Herren, Bern-Bumpliz, Switzerland.

Kurt Kleinstauber, Limbach-Oberfrohna, D.D.R.

Penti Lincola, Kohmoinen Poikkijarvi, Finland.

C. J. Mead, British Trust for Ornithology, Hertfordshire, England.

Theodor Mebs, Ostee uber Oldenburg, Holstein, West Germany.

Karl Heinz Moll, Waren Muritz, D.D.R.

Gunter Oehme, PI Lehrstuhl Biologie, D.D.R.

Ian Presst, Nature Conservancy, Huntingdon, England.

Sergej Postupalsky, University of Michigan Biological St. Royal Oak.

Derek A. Ratcliffe, Nature Conservancy, Huntingdon, England.

Horst Schroder, Muritz Museum, Waren, D.D.R.

Tauvo Suominen, Helsinki, Finland.

Jean Francois Terrasse, La Garenne, France.

Michel Y. Terrasse, La Garenne, France.

* * * * * * * *

The book-compilation of this conference, edited by Professor J. J. Hickey of the University of Wisconsin, was published four years after the conference under the title of "Peregrine Falcon Populations - Their Biology and Decline". This is a title which is in itself misleading, for it infers a conclusion which is unwarranted and drawn from some very inconclusive evidence. In the final chapters written by Hickey himself, the author-editor postulates a world-wide decline of the species from evidence collected entirely in the United States and a part of Western Europe. This conclusion is drawn despite the fact that it was certainly known, and was even pointed out in the introductory chapters of the book, that the peregrine falcon has its highest breeding densities and major populations in those very parts of the world where human population densities are lowest, while all of the evidence of declines are from minor regions where human populations are very high and where, in addition, massive and widespread ecological damage has been perpetrated on the landscape.

The peregrine falcon is, then, a world species. The Madison conference was purported to be a world conference. From the regions of the world where peregrines are known to occur as breeding populations, reports were presented as follows:

From Western Europe -

Finland	- 2 contributors
West Germany	- 1 contributor
East Germany	- 2 contributors

France - 2 contributors

Switzerland - 1 contributor

Britain - 1 contributor

This comprises a total of nine reports from the most densely populated and most heavily industrialized part of Europe, comprising a total land area rather less than that of the State of Alaska.

From Eastern U.S.A.:

General Report - 3 contributors

Pennsylvania - 1 contributor

Hudson River, New York - 2 contributors

Massachusetts - 1 contributor

Wisconsin - 2 contributors

This is a total of nine reports from the most densely populated and most heavily industrialized region in North America, comprising a total land area slightly larger than the State of Alaska.

From Western U.S.A.:

Northwestern U.S.A. - 1 contributor

Rocky Mountain Region - 1 contributor

Alaska - 1 contributor

This is a total of three contributions from all of the United States west of the Mississippi River, including Alaska, and comprising a total land area about five times greater than that of the eastern United States and western Europe put together.

From all of the rest of North America:

British Columbia - 1 contributor

Alberta - 1 contributor

Canadian Arctic - 1 contributor

Mexico (Baja peninsula only) - 1 contributor

This is a total of four reports from a land area greater than that of the entire U.S.A. that includes all (except Alaska) of the best peregrine habitats on the North American continent.

There were no reports at all from anywhere else in the world. Here are some of the more important regions where peregrines are known to occur, and include some of the best peregrine habitats in the world: eastern Europe, Spain, Islands of the Mediterranean, all of mainland Asia including Siberia, all of Africa, all of Australia and of major islands, Greenland, Tasmania, Madagascar, the Philippines, all of Indonesia, Japan, the Kuriles and Aleutians, the Falklands and Chilean archipelago, the Alaskan archipelago, the Canadian Arctic archipelago.

Against this enormous area from which no information at all was forthcoming, and adding to it the great areas of North America from which very scant information was available, the areas reported from in any detail appear pathetically small: the lower Hudson, for example, received far more time and attention than the entire Canadian Arctic. From the areas reporting, for what they are worth, declines were listed as occurring in western Europe, in all of the United States except Alaska, in Baja (Mexico), and in one Canadian province (Alberta). Declines were not reported from the major areas of good wilderness and near wilderness habitats of North America: Alaska, British Columbia, the Yukon, North West Territories and Ungava.

The causes, or postulated causes of declines where reported by the original contributors were varied, and despite the conclusions reached by the editor were not all due to contamination by any means. Some declines clearly antedate the introduction into the environment of the non-degradeable pesticides. Over much of the western U.S.A., in southern Alberta, and in the Okanagan valley of British Columbia the abandonment of aerie sites preceded by many years the use of DDT. So too did much, perhaps most of the documented decline of the eastern North American population, although the terminal loss in this area did coincide in time with the introduction of the persistent chemicals. In Finland, Germany and Britain, and to some extent in France, a very abrupt decline of a previously reasonably stable population does coincide almost exactly with the widespread use of DDT in European agri-

culture, and the evidence of a co-relation in Europe is much more convincing than anything from North America. Even so, the French contributor listed sport shooting of raptores over live owls used as decoys as being, in his opinion, the main factor causing the declines in France. In just one situation were the activities of falconers listed as being of any real significance in the opinion of the original observers, and significantly perhaps, this situation was that of the Hudson River aeries where an admittedly remnant population was attempting to maintain itself directly adjacent to the largest city on the North American continent.

This then was the sum of the information coming from the Madison conference. It proved that peregrine falcon populations were declining in parts of western Europe and over most of the United States of America and that some of these declines were simultaneous. It did not, and could not prove that the declines were linked to the use of DDT even though it is alleged (and widely accepted) as having done so. It also did not prove or even suggest at the time that falconers had anything to do with the declines (except doubtfully in one case) and yet this has been a persistent and strident claim ever since this conference.

Nevertheless, following the Madison conference, a number of research surveys were immediately funded to reassess the 'status' of those North American populations from which the original observers had not reported declines. With but two exceptions the individuals chosen to make these reassessments were not the same as those who had made the original contribution, and here enters the first hint of something not quite as it should be. The two exceptions were men already employed by what is termed 'recognized research institutions' - the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the Canadian Wildlife Service. In view of what followed one cannot but wonder if perhaps predetermined results from these reassessments were not expected, perhaps to some degree demanded. At any rate, it is now on the record that not one of these

funded researchers found unaltered reproduction in any of the populations re-studied. While for reasons which will presently appear I personally doubt the honesty of some of these, others were unquestionably honest in their findings, but even these are questionable as to their validity, this being due to the degree of interference implied by the activities of the researchers themselves. Falcons are not at all tolerant of disturbance during their reproductive cycle. The interference by falconers, coming as it does late in the cycle when the young are almost ready to fly (if even then, for not all falconers try to obtain birds at this age) is minimal. The interference by researchers is not. Any studies that involve repeated visits to the nesting ledge each year, from egg-laying to fledging (and this for several years in succession, as these studies have done), will in themselves result in declines of the segment of the population so studied. When in at least one of these studies adult birds were shot to obtain the brains for pesticide analysis, one need go no further; such declines do not necessarily extend beyond the immediate area of interference and no postulations that they do should be made.

In addition to this, insofar as arctic populations are concerned, no study of less than ten years' duration is indicative of any valid trend, for any two or three year study by itself may show either rapid decline or equally rapid increase as a segment of a cycle, and until the full cycle is studied the segment is meaningless. Unlike studies of arctic mammals, where trends in population can be related to Hudson's Bay Company fur purchase records extending over two hundred years, the studies of arctic raptores must stand isolated from any similar comparative background, without which anything less than a ten year study is useless.

At any rate, only four years after the Madison conference and in the same year that the results of this conference were published, a second peregrine falcon conference was held at Cornell University in New York. Reports of declines were expected and were without

exception forthcoming. What followed is contained in a report on the conference as follows: "The main topic was a resolution, proposed by Hickey and directed to the appropriate offices, to have the peregrine declared an endangered species."

Unlike the Madison conference which was open to anyone who wished to attend, the Cornell conference was closed. Attendance was by invitation only - a technique most effective in controlling dissent. While at Madison the contributors were mostly falconers giving volunteer data and information collected over many years at their own expense and on their own time, at Cornell this situation had been entirely corrected and the contributors were all research scientists or students employed on grants or salaries by "recognized institutions". Of the forty individuals listed as being in attendance four were Patuxent employees, two were Audubon Society employees, nine were Cornell University employees, three were Canadian Wildlife Service employees and seven were employed by other universities. Both Patuxent and Cornell are committed to long-term research projects relative to peregrines in particular, and to some other birds of prey as well. The Patuxent and Cornell projects certainly, and possibly some others, immediately qualify for U.S. Federal grants the moment the peregrine was officially declared to be "endangered". At least thirteen individuals, one third of the total attendance at the Cornell conference, stood to gain directly in employment or in employment prospects by the passage of the Hickey resolution, and a number of others would quite possibly be similarly favorably affected. With this in mind the conclusion that this was probably a rigged conference with a preconceived objective is inescapable.

Below is the list of the Cornell conference participants:

* 1 Dr. J. J. Hickey, University of Wisconsin

2 Dr. Dean Amadon, American Museum of Natural History

3 Dr. Sandy Sprunt, Audubon Society

4 Dr. Eugene Knoder, Audubon Society

* 5 Dr. Lucille Stickel, Patuxent

* 6 Dr. William Stickel, Patuxent

* 7 Dr. R. D. Porter, Patuxent

* 8 Mr. Stanley Wiemeyer, Patuxent

* 9 Mr. Richard Fyfe, Canadian Wildlife Service

* 10 Dr. Tony Keith, Canadian Wildlife Service

* 11 Mr. Keith Hodson, University of British Columbia

12 Mr. Jon N. Gerrard, University of Montreal

* 13 Mr. Daniel Berger, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

14 Mrs. Fran Hammerstrom, Plainfield, Wisconsin

15 Mr. Robert Riseborough, University of California, Berkeley

16 Mr. Steve Herman, University of California, Davis

17 Mr. Paul Spitzer, Old Lime, Connecticut

18 Dr. Byron Harrell, University of South Dakota

19 Dr. Donald V. Hunter, Raptor Research Foundation, Centerville

* 20 Mr. James Weaver, North American Falconers Association

21 Mr. Robert Berry, North American Falconers Association

22 Dr. Walter Spofford, Upstate Medical Center, Syracuse

23 Dr. Heinz Meng, State College of New York, New Paltz

* 24 Dr. Clayton M. White, Cornell

* 25 Dr. James Enderson, Cornell

* 26 Dr. David Peakall, Cornell

* 27 Mr. Jeff Lincer, Cornell

* 28 Mr. John F. Haugh, Cornell

* 29 Mr. Stanley Temple, Cornell

* 30 Mr. John Snelling, Cornell

* 31 Mr. James Grier, Cornell

32 Dr. Noel Snyder, University of South Florida

33 Mrs. Helen Snyder, University of South Florida

34 Dr. Joseph Murphy, Brigham Young University, Utah

35 Dr. Peter Ames, Encyclopaedia Britannica

36 Mr. Charles B. Sindelar, Jr., Waukesha, Wisconsin

* 37 Mr. Sergei Postupalsky, University of Wisconsin

* 38 Dr. William Wimsett, Cornell

* 39 Dr. Tom Cade, Cornell

40 Dr. I. G. Swartz, University of Alaska

Asterisks indicate those individuals who at the time of writing are, or have been, engaged in some aspect of paid employment in research work relative to peregrine falcons and who therefore stand to gain in continued employment, re-employment or prestige from the passage of the Hickey Resolution.

Of the forty conferees in attendance only nine could possibly be described as being free agents. Was this a conference - or was it a conspiracy?

Dr. Heinz Meng, one of the few potential dissenters who was invited to attend the Cornell conference, wrote in a letter of protest to the Hon. Walter J. Hickle (in part) as follows: "The letter from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is signed by a number of people, but less than a dozen (of the people in attendance) had any first-hand knowledge of the status of the peregrine falcon. You may not be aware that a number of people, including myself and the founder of Raptor Research (Donald V. Hunter, Jr.), refused to sign this letter (referring here to the letter by Cade to the 'appropriate offices'). I have been studying the (migrant) population along the east coast since 1941 and I cannot say that there has been any severe reduction in numbers, certainly not to the point where F.p. tundrius should be considered endangered."

Nevertheless, as we shall presently see, the Cornell conference made the myth of the vanishing peregrine an official fact. Now the stated and "scientifically proven" cause of declines, both real and fictional, has very consistently been listed as being primarily caused by the contamination of the adult birds by DDT with resultant thin-shelled eggs which break or fail to hatch. Yet these statements are always, and with equal consistency and persistence, qualified by some snide or sinister reference to the "imperative need" to control "para-

metric factors or other controllable factors further contributing to the decline." Falconers are seldom mentioned directly, the inference apparently being considered to be more effective. Yet it is only in reference to this inference that the myth of the vanishing peregrine makes any sense or serves any purpose, and it is as a weapon to eliminate falconry from North America first and certainly from the entire world if possible eventually, that this myth was created. It is only in this context that the "main topic" of the Cornell conference makes sense. The myth itself serves a logical, if sinister, purpose.

This word 'sinister' is a medieval term that originally referred simply to the condition of left-handedness. Yet even in medieval times the word soon began to carry with it some hint of its present-day aura of menace. In medieval lexicon the 'Knight Sinister' was indeed left-handed, but the very fact of his being so also made him extremely unpredictable and dangerous in combat, this because his normally right-handed adversary would, or could be easily led to assume, that his right hand was dominant and the one to bear watching, when in fact the most accurate and deadly blow would be struck from the left.

The myth of the vanishing peregrine is sinister in that it serves a sinister purpose. The people who have gone to the time, trouble and expense of creating and promoting this myth are not fools. They have a purpose. Certainly they know full well that their "endangered peregrine" is a fabrication, for the biological facts about this falcon are clearly outlined in the introductory chapters of the Hickey-edited report of the Madison conference. They know that any species that has the kind of biological resiliency to permit it to breed from the arctic and sub-antarctic to the equator, from sea level to fourteen thousand feet elevation, from rainforest humidity to saharan aridity, and on the roof ledges of a modern city or in the falconers' mews, is not a convincing candidate for immediate or early extinction. Of course, in reality every species is in a sense "endangered", in that in due time, each in its turn will become extinct. The peregrine is

of course in this sense threatened, but if so it is threatened in about the same context and to the same degree that mankind is threatened. The major parametric and wilderness populations of the species have, as has been pointed out, not even been investigated. The real purpose therefore for all the publicity relative to this species cannot possibly be for the announced purpose of "saving" it from "threatened" extinction. Thus it must be that the real reason is not the announced reason, but is instead the half-hidden sinister reason, the one that appears by inference and innuendo - that of promoting a popular concept that a "noble" species is "threatened" and then using this "aroused and enlightened" public opinion as their weapon to "save" the peregrine from falconers.

The Madison conference and the Cornell conference were the first steps toward this objective. The open Madison conference served the purpose of drawing out, and identifying most of the leading falconers of North America, and to some extent ascertaining their degree of knowledge and general attitudes. The closed Cornell conference clearly had the Hickey resolution and the Cade communication as its pre-arranged objective. Immediately following the Cornell conference a carefully selected elite of younger falconers, particularly those of University age and with aspirations towards degrees in the Natural Sciences, were given paid positions in "recognized" institutions on projects related to the study of the birds of prey. The economic control of an articulate but easily influenced group of falconers was thus achieved, and this primary control implies other, more subtle controls, in the findings contained in their reports certainly, and in the "responsibility" of the content of any public expressions as well. From here on any protests from uncontrolled (or uncontrollable) falconers relative to the next moves could be dismissed as "irresponsible" and countered by "responsible" statements from someone of those under close control. And this is exactly what has happened.

Now comes the crunch. I have a copy of the letter that went out

from the Assistant Secretary of the Interior following receipt of the Cade communication to the "appropriate offices". It is addressed to H. R. Woodford, President of the International Association of Game and Fish Conservation Commissioners, dated as of January 23, 1970. It reads as follows:

"Dear Harry:

Within the last two decades the Peregrine Falcon has suffered an unprecedented population decline throughout much of its world-wide range. Of the three subspecies which frequent the North American continent the American peregrine (Falco peregrinus anatum) has completely disappeared as a breeding bird over the entire eastern United States.

In addition, other populations of this particular subspecies in the western United States and most of Canada are greatly reduced, so much so that the American peregrine is considered to be in danger of extinction. North American peregrine falcons need additional protection. The time to protect these magnificent birds is now, when two of the subspecies involved are still common in part of their former continent-wide range.

In recognition of the immediate need to afford protection to the peregrine falcon, we propose to develop a program directed toward prohibiting the killing or capture of the peregrine falcon on any public lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior except for special purposes and under permit authorized by the Secretary of the Interior.

These protective measures would apply to the American peregrine falcon, Falco peregrinus anatum; the arctic peregrine falcon, Falco peregrinus tundrius, and the Peale's peregrine falcon, Falco peregrinus pealei.

There has been an encouraging change in public attitude towards the birds of prey of North America in recent years and we believe the efforts to protect the peregrine falcon will meet with widespread public approval and support. Certainly strong support can be expected from the National Audubon Society, the Raptor Research Foundation, and

knowledgeable ornithologists in the United States and Canada. Responsible falconers also would support a ban on the taking of American peregrines but may voice strong opposition to the imposition of controls on the taking of Peale's and arctic peregrines. Their opposition will be based on the belief that neither of the latter subspecies is endangered at this time.

However, data presented at the recent conference on birds of prey at Cornell University are conclusive that F.p. anatum and F.p. tundrius are in a precarious state. The conference also felt that F.p. pealei is also threatened with extinction so long as high ratios of pesticide residues persist in our environment.

In view of these facts we believe that steps should be taken now to attempt to regulate controllable activities which affect peregrine populations. The falconers' opposition can be somewhat mitigated by the provision of a permit system to trap specimens of any nonendangered subspecies from populations which would not be adversely affected by such trapping.

We would appreciate the views of the "International" on this proposal before it is submitted to the Secretary of the Interior for approval, and we are enclosing a copy of Dr. T. J. Cade's letter of December 9, 1969, to the Secretary for your study and comment.

May we hear from you when you have had an opportunity to contact the appropriate member of your association.

Sincerely yours, "

This is a letter of intent and is, in effect, a request for a continent-wide "open season" on falconers. Implied is a considerable degree of interference in regional Canadian affairs - a degree that was to be brought rather forcibly to my attention later in the year. It is in addition a wonderful example of high level Civil Service semantics in that far more is implied than is actually said. What this letter really says can be discerned only if one is well versed in reading the language of implication that is so much a part of this kind of communic-

ation, and by one who knows something of the background and attitudes of Fish and Game Commissioners. What follows is a rather free translation of this letter to bring into focus some of the things implied but not stated, and to state more nakedly the real meaning.

'Dear Harry:

As you know, the Fish and Game administrations have long been associated with the persecution of the birds of prey. It has been brought to my attention by some of our leading scientific and public relations advisers that in order to keep abreast of recent developments in science and in the change of public attitudes, we should change our official position and as quickly as possible our public image, in relation to these birds. Recently there has been a campaign launched by one of the leading bird protection societies, which is being backed by impressive names in the scientific world, oriented toward the objective of focusing public attention and sympathy on what is being termed the "plight" of the birds of prey generally, and to that of one species in particular. This last is one that in the past we have traditionally classified as vermin, and which has hitherto been referred to on our vermin lists as the Duck Hawk. It has been pointed out that it might be to our interest if we would henceforth refer to this bird as the Peregrine Falcon and, in addition, to indicate concern or appreciation, whichever is appropriate, use some qualifying emotive adjective when making reference to it, such as "rare", "threatened", "vanishing", or alternatively, "noble", "grand" or "magnificent".

It should be noted that some of these terms infer that this bird is now very rare, and as this is the concept that it now seems to be to our interest to convey we should always stress this as being an accepted fact.

The publicity campaign being conducted at the present time has thus far refrained from making any reference to our traditional attitude and any effects on the present rarity of this bird that this may have

had. Instead of this, attention is being drawn to two recent developments which together are being publicized as the chief causes of the declines. One of these is environmental pollution, primarily that of DDT which is receiving considerable attention, of which I am sure you are aware. However, as we are the administrative heads of government agencies and as the continued use of this and other products of a similar nature in agriculture and forestry are often supported by the heads of other government agencies, no suggestion has been made that we become involved in this aspect of the campaign.

We have been asked instead to pay particular attention to those people who, in recent years, have been capturing some of these birds for training and recreational use in the sport of falconry. The suggestion is that it might be to our interest to set very rigid controls on any acquisition of these birds and then enforce such controls very strictly. A program of harassment and persecution in the name of strong enforcement might do much to disassociate our present attitude from our past record.

We are of course assured that any such program will have the full support of the bird protectionist societies such as Audubon. It will be suggested that responsible falconers should support the ban on the taking of these birds. Such falconers as are currently employed by state, society or federal agencies, or on university-approved projects should not be affected. Presumably these will be fully protected by suitable permits but in any case are in no position to protest. We might reduce the degree of protest from other sources and make our actions seem less unreasonable if at the present time no particular attention is paid to the capture or possession of birds of prey other than falcons, and particularly of this one kind of falcon.

You will understand of course that the fact that this letter has been written at all on a matter seemingly so inconsequential indicates that there has been considerable pressure brought to bear that to some degree forces me to do so, and this should be taken into consider-

ation in relation to this request for compliance in setting this action in motion.

We would appreciate your views . . . etc.

The proposals, real and implied, must have received the approval requested, for certainly the year 1970 was marked by a continent-wide harassment of falconers of a range and on a scale completely unprecedented. Relative to their numbers I suspect that no other group involved in a totally innocuous recreational activity has ever before received such dedicated harassment on such a wide scale. Attempts to obtain birds have been made virtually a criminal act, with falconers being treated as international criminals, or criminal suspects.

Possibly by using the services of those falconers employed by recognized institutions, possibly by the acquisition of falconry club membership lists, or both, a list of "suspects" seems to have been drawn up and this list must have been sent out to every enforcement agency associated with wildlife work as well as to Canadian and U.S. federal agencies.

At any rate I know for certain that there is such a list, and I know that my name is on that list. I also know the names of a number of other falconers, both from Canada and the United States, that are also on the list. This list may well include the name of every falconer who is, or who ever was, a member of any falconry club anywhere on this continent, and quite possibly the names of a number of British and German falconers as well. It is of course "classified" information, and as such is not available on request at all, but that such a list has been compiled at all is an affront and a threat to every falconer on this continent, and in a way to every citizen of two countries, for the procedure is totalitarian in concept and completely at variance with North American traditions. It is also, to no minor degree, overt interference by a United States federal agency in the affairs of regional Canadian administrations.

In 1970 the Fish and Wildlife regulations of the province of

Quebec had no statutes whatsoever which in any way specifically protected any of the birds of prey. This was no oversight, the lack of such statutes being traditional on this continent as a procedure to permit the casual shooting of these birds in the context of their being vermin. In the last five years or so most states and provinces have updated their regulations and have protected sometimes some, sometimes all, of their raptorial birds. Quebec had not yet done so. Accordingly, in June of 1970 I outfitted for a wilderness river trip near Fort Chimo in Ungava to obtain young gyrfalcons of an age that might, with proper handling, be eventually suitable for domestic breeding experiments. The overall expense of a trip of this kind is not inconsiderable, and I had budgeted some $2,000 for this high risk venture - not taxpayers' money either, but my own. I had originally planned a charter flight from Fort Chimo to a river some two hundred miles away, but on arriving in Fort Chimo found that this river was still iced over. I had seen what looked like a gyrfalcon nest site from the aircraft as it made the landing circle right at Fort Chimo, so the charter flight was cancelled and the Koksoak River at Fort Chimo was worked instead. Here, in three days, working from a rubber inflatable boat, but with no previous experience in this part of the arctic whatsoever, I found seven nesting pairs of the "remnant population" (according to Roland Clement of the Audubon Society) of Canadian gyrfalcons. I climbed to three of these nest sites and obtained twelve young birds. This was done in less than a week from the time of landing at Fort Chimo: two of the sites were in sight of the settlement. Four sites of the "vanishing peregrine" were found during the same time and these were merely mapped. No particular care had been taken to hide myself or to keep secret what I was about.

Two days before I was due to leave Fort Chimo for Montreal two Americans whom I knew, both at the time employed by Canadian Wildlife Service to "survey" falcons in northern Canada, and one of them an employee of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, arrived in Fort Chimo.

These men had been in this area before and had themselves taken falcons from this area in previous years; moreover, I was told by Quebec authorities later that they were in possession of permits of some kind that allegedly gave them authority to obtain falcons in 1970. At any rate these men certainly knew my purpose for being in Fort Chimo. My information is that either officials in Canadian Wildlife Service or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were immediately contacted, a procedure that a year previously would have meant nothing at all, but with a suspect list out, and my name on that list, the results in 1970 were to be very different. Officials in Quebec City were contacted and a directive given to the local constable at Fort Chimo. I was detained for three days without charges of any kind being laid in Fort Chimo, while lawyers in Quebec City went over all the Quebec Wildlife codes and regulations to try to come up with some technicality under which prosecution could proceed. This was finally found in a 1968 Order in Council under which it was deemed an offense to hunt, or be in possession of wildlife without a permit.

Two officers from the Quebec Fish and Wildlife branch were then sent to Fort Chimo with a directive to proceed with the prosecution, and this was done. These officers were provided with a list of names of other falconers who for some reason or other were thought to be, or possibly were, in Quebec, and this list or a part of it was read to me during one of the rather lengthy interrogation sessions. It contained names from three Canadian provinces and states from as far west as Washington and California and as far east as Florida and New York. Despite the international criminal overtones given to this incident to which, by the way, I understand that certain persons in Audubon Society wish to give "the widest possible publicity", the offense was a misdemeanour: also it referred to the possession of wildlife, not of falcons. I could have shot out all seven pairs and the four pairs of peregrines too, and nothing would have been done. The important thing here, however, is that this "incident" did not just happen - it was

made to happen. It was a direct consequence of the Cornell conference, and this kind of consequence was the preconceived intent of that conference. While this 'happened' in Canada it had 'Made in U.S.A.' written all over it. I too think this incident deserves the widest possible publicity, but again (and in this context I must ask the question) - was the Cornell conference indeed a scientific conference, or was it a conspiracy?

Now, as of 1970 then, phase one of the vanishing peregrine myth-objective - the closing off of legal access to wild falcons (not just peregrines either) to any but a self-appointed handful of the scientific elite - is virtually complete. Despite this the 'problem' of falconers still remains unsolved, even as it relates to the peregrine. This is because, at the very same time that legal access to the wild populations was being "controlled", falconers have been making real progress in the procedures leading to the complete domestication of the species. The full implication of this is of course that if continued, and successful on any significant scale, it would remove the possession and use of the bird in falconry completely from the control of any administrative authority excepting those concerned with the health of animals. In the context of what has gone before, it would seem then that here is the real reason for the sudden interest in peregrine breeding projects at Patuxent and Cornell. Again the real motivation seems to me to have sinister implications. Is it really to try to breed falcons that these projects have been initiated or is it to provide a well-publicized and "professionally" monitored "authorized project" as a pre-emptive to the known successes of falconers? When rumours are rife that there is serious consideration being given to the planning of the legal procedures whereby falconers' birds could be seized and placed at the disposal of the professionals in these "authorized projects", there seems little room for doubt. Moreover, in view of what has already occurred, one must give a certain credence to these rumours.

It must be pointed out at this point that the Raptor Research

Foundation program is not at all in the same category as those of Cornell and Patuxent. Raptor Research Foundation was organized by a remarkably foresighted individual, Donald V. Hunter, Jr. of Centerville, South Dakota, who organized and began work oriented toward the domestication of the large falcons some time before the Madison conference, and well before the wave of publicity relating to the "plight" of the birds of prey. Much of the early effort was oriented to ascertaining the kind of birds most likely to breed and to efforts aimed at acquiring such birds. This institution, which is not federally or institutionally funded and in which membership is entirely voluntary, had already accomplished most of the basic research in relationship to the domestic breeding of the large falcons long before the major institutions were even interested. It is the late entry of these last, combined with the rather lofty disdain with which the proven accomplishments of falconers are officially regarded, that make these projects suspect. What makes them even more suspect is their announced objective and the methods by which they have set out to achieve that objective, as will presently be shown.

If the trends that are indicated at present relative to the domestic propagation of these birds turn out to have any long-term validity, it is a certainty that if falcons are to be bred in captivity at all it will be done by falconers, and only by falconers. This is simply because the economics implied by work done so far makes any centralized project prohibitively expensive, this quite regardless of whether such a project is set up for altruistic purposes or for economic gain.

I have probably as much or more factual data on, and personal experience with, falcon breeding as anyone else in the world, for I am and have been one of the pioneers in this area of research. What follows are data and tables from a paper being prepared for publication on the experiments in the propagation of the peregrine falcon. This is no airy projection of great things about to be done - this is what has been done. The admittedly limited success so far achieved relates to certain back-

ground material which is important.

Falconry has a history that goes back in time for something in excess of two thousand years. The age class of birds most widely utilized in traditional falconry are those which have been captured during the autumn or winter of their first season after leaving the nest. In all this time, no matter how long an individual bird has been kept subsequent to its capture, has it ever produced an egg. Nor has any large falcon captured as an adult, later in life. Falconers have therefore tended to write off birds with either of these origins and background as being useless as prospects for domestic propagation. The salaried researchers have not, and are currently engaged in the acquiring of these very birds, as the article in "The California Condor" points out. It would appear that they are either unaware of, or are deliberately ignoring the record, or are more concerned with appearances than with the attainment of results. In addition, no falcon of any kind, regardless of species or background, that is of arctic origin, has so far laid eggs: also, no falcon of any kind (except European and American kestrels) that has been taken as a nestling and raised in confinement has so far laid eggs. It is of course birds of this latter class which must produce with some degree of predictability if any of the centralized breeding projects are to succeed. Yet so far all of such lifetime confined birds seem quite as useless for breeding as those of wild-caught origin.

Of the large falcons two species only have so far produced eggs in captivity, but they have done so with an encouraging degree of predictability when they have been taken at a specific age and have been subsequently handled in a particular way. Thus far all producing birds have been either prairie falcons or peregrine falcons, have been taken as nestlings from mid-latitude aerie sites, and have been subsequently kept at approximately the same latitude as their point of origin. These birds have subsequently grown to flying age in close association with humans, and incidental to this, but perhaps just as important,

have been kept inside a building much of the time. They are also birds that, without exception, have been trained as either hunting falcons or lure falcons, and that have accordingly been kept in strong active physical condition for the first year to three years of their life. It seems that this total physiological adjustment to the surroundings, combined with the high degree of physical well-being that is the result of flying, are the necessary pre-conditions to ovulation in the females of these birds. Handled in this way prairie falcons have produced eggs as early as their second year, but to date no peregrine falcon has laid eggs before the third year. If the individual training and flying of every female falcon for from one to two years is the necessary prerequisite to domestic propagation of the peregrine, as now seems to be the case, no centralized project can possibly afford the price of success.

To 1968 the recorded production of eggs has been confined to three European peregrines, one mid-continental North American peregrine, two west coast (Peale's) peregrines and one prairie falcon. However, in 1968 and subsequently, the number of these birds of both species has jumped at least threefold and probably higher, as an increasing number of falconers' birds have come to reproductive age. All of these are birds with the background outlined, and almost all are owned by falconers. Unfortunately the production records of many, perhaps most of these may never be made available simply because of the harassment to which falconers are being subjected, resulting in an evasive secrecy that is the natural and necessary reaction to such harassment.

Most of the eggs produced by captive falcons have been infertile. These include eggs from lone unmated females and, to date, all first sets of eggs.

Remarkably little difficulty has been encountered in relationship to the males except that there is an appearance of their having a considerably shorter life span than that of females. Only when males have

been introduced abruptly into the 'territory' of a lone broody female have they been attacked, otherwise the record is one of tolerance, passing to acceptance and then to eventual mating. Males of wild origin, regardless of age, have with but one questionable exception come into reproductive capability when kept in the presence of ovulating females. Males taken as nestlings and later flown as trained falcons have an equally good record, but there is no data at all as yet relative to males taken as nestlings and kept in confinement.

Recorded production of fertile eggs prior to 1969, including these sets of eggs in which only some were fertile, have been confined to three peregrines and one prairie falcon. Two of these peregrine falcons were mated to two different males, so that in all a total of only ten birds has been involved. The production record breaks down as follows:

Renz Waller, Germany. 1939 - 1943 - F.p.peregrinus, 1 female, 2 males.
15 eggs, 9 fertile or no data,
6 fertile, 3 hatched, 2 raised.

Larry Schramm, Portland, Oregon. - F.p.pealei, 1 female, 1 male.
1967 10 eggs, 6 infertile or no data,
4 fertile, 2 hatched, 1 raised.

Frank Beebe, Saanichton, B. C. - F.p.pealei, 1 female, 2 males.
1966 39 eggs, 22 infertile or no data,
17 fertile, 6 hatched, 1 raised.

Henry Kendall, St. Louis, Mo. - F. mexicanus, 1 female, 1 male.
1966 14 eggs, 8 infertile, 6 fertile,
5 hatched, 3 raised.

As has been already pointed out this record is now incomplete. It does show how far falconers had come during the relatively short period when it was possible to obtain birds openly, and before the professionals announced their intention to pre-empt and by inference close this area of research to the "unauthorized". From here on, of course, as long as these professionals are operative, it will be their programs

that will receive all favourable publicity, no matter how sorry the results.

Now it is sure to be said that I am being altogether too cynical and critical of the professional programs, and that they may be truly oriented to the high-sounding objective of propagating an "endangered" species for the entirely altruistic purpose of reintroducing them into regions from which they have vanished. I think it is quite impossible to be too cynical about this. The question that has never been asked, and that requires an honest answer when it is asked, is that of just why after all should public monies be spent on the rehabilitation of a bird of prey of most doubtful value to most of the ecological regions in which it occurs?

The rationale of the falconer, his purpose and motivation for attempting the domestic propagation of peregrines, are perfectly logical and lucid. Falconers simply value these birds for their own personal enjoyment and wish to breed them in the context of enlightened self-interest. Whether the species is endangered actually or only allegedly, the result to them is the same. In either case it means reduced or more difficult and trying access to birds from the wild populations. No additional reason is needed.

The motives of the professionals defy rational explanation unless they are other than the ones announced. Of course those who are being paid to work on assignments are not in the above category, their motivation being simply economic. The difference in rational motivation between the falconer and the professional lies in a peculiar characteristic of the peregrine itself for, according to at least two of the leading and most deeply "concerned" authorities - Professor J.J. Hickey and Dr. Tom Cade - the peregrine is a weed species. With this ecological assessment of the peregrine falcon I concur, but such an appraisal at once makes nonsense of the professional programs, for it raises the immediately associated question of the desirability of the proposed reintroductions. It also raises by inference the advisability

of spending public money on any program designed to do so.

For however much the peregrine falcon may be extolled and glamorized by descriptive adjectives (most of them cribbed from the literature of falconry at that), the unpleasant ecological fact intrudes that the 'noble peregrine' over probably not less than ninety percent of its world-wide range is indeed a weed, an aggressive invader of ecological systems in which it does not really belong and in which it competes with other more specialized and regionally confined species. The fact that it has managed to introduce itself into the ranges of these other species makes it no less of an intruder, and certainly no more desirable there than had it been introduced into such regions by man.

Examples of this kind of intrusion are many and world-wide. Most of the large open-landscape ecosystems lying in continental interiors have evolved one or more species of falcon that clearly belong to and are a product of their particular region. Such species are the prairie falcon of western North America, the Lugger falcon of India, the Lanner falcon of Africa, the Saker falcon of central Asia, the gray falcon of Australia and the gyrfalcon of the arctic basin are all examples of regionally specialized species. The peregrine co-inhabits the range of all these, always to some degree competitively, and in such relationships is quite properly described as a weed. To be more specific, the avian ecology of the American desert is incomplete without the prairie falcon, for this species evolved in this region and is found nowhere else, but the same ecology is perfectly complete without the presence of the invading competitive peregrine. The fact that prairie falcons so regularly occupy (or reoccupy) peregrine sites the moment that these become available is proof of the competitive dominance of the intruding species. It follows then, that however much a falconer might deplore the decline or even the total disappearance of peregrines from the American West, no reasonably well-informed ecologist should do so. The same thing applies to all of those populations of peregrines that have successfully invaded the ranges of any of the more specialized

regionally confined species listed here. In fact, all the peregrines in the world that live competitively to other species this way are, in an ecological sense, surplus population, and while their acquisition by falconers can of course be made illegal, nevertheless it cannot be faulted on any ecological principle.

It will be pointed out of course that in the comparatively small and ecologically similar regions of western Europe and eastern North America the peregrine is non-competitive. Very true, but also it is equally true that the peregrine is equally non-competitive in almost all situations where it occurs insularly, or parametric to continents. It is almost certainly in the ecology of the coast littoral that the peregrine evolved; and in the habitat of shore line, salt marsh, sea cliff and river estuary, in association with marine bird colonies, shore birds and waterfowl, the peregrine complements and completes a specific and definable ecology. The adaptation to living inland, whether in a competitive situation or not, is secondary and to some degree opportunistic. Nothing can be said with certainty as to the duration in time of the European inland populations, although some of these may well have developed coincident to the opening of the primitive European forests by man. In eastern North America the inland population was more certainly one of long duration, even though the primitive eastern North American situation was most unique, for the following reason. When North America was first colonized by European settlers by far the most abundant form of life in the eastern deciduous forest region was the passenger pigeon, this both in the number of separate individuals and in the combined weight of their biomass. When the peregrine falcon finally disappeared from this same region rather less than three centuries later, the passenger pigeon had been extinct for over half a century and the overwhelmingly most abundant living creature in the region was man. When measured against a change of that magnitude the wonder is not that the peregrines are gone but that they

endured as long as they did. Any idea, no matter how noble or altruistic, and regardless of how well promoted, that this species can be successfully reintroduced in this region without first introducing some high population, preferably colonial food species, is pretty ridiculous, and I am sure that those who propose the reinstatement of the peregrine into this region know this. The proposal is therefore suspect and the projects deriving from it equally suspect. The preemptive purpose is probably the most important, with publicity running a close second.

All life has value. In the conceptual framework from which mankind has traditionally viewed nature and his environment, almost all other forms of life have been valued, tolerated, ignored, hunted or destroyed in a very direct way in relation to their immediate and visible effect on the particular population of mankind with which they happened to be in contact.

Within this framework the human attitude to the peregrine falcon has varied from deification to vilification. At times or in places where falconry has been either popular or the property of a privileged class, this bird has been used, valued, protected, glorified and even sanctified. At other times and in other situations, but most notably in comparatively recent times (the gamekeeping era of Britain and Europe and in the heyday of the commercial waterfowler in North America), it has been cursed and vilified, shot and pole-trapped, and its nesting sites ravaged.

Curiously, these two extremes of attitude have been almost exclusively particular to the peoples of northern Europe or of north European ancestry. The peoples of Asia have either valued the bird or ignored it, and the latter attitude is the general rule in those parts of the world not predominantly occupied by peoples originating in northern Europe.

Between these two extremes, of very recent origin and, significantly perhaps, also of north European origin, is the sophisticated

intrinsic-value concept. This is the ecological concept - the idea that any living thing has an intrinsic value as a part of a complex ecological system. It is this last value that is currently being given great and perhaps well-deserved and overdue attention in the Anglo-American world. This value-concept has its highest validity where it can be used to counter negative or destructive attitudes toward any aspect of nature, but if it is to be a valid concept it should never itself be used in a destructive way, to negate or to question other values; certainly it should never be considered or thought of as being an exclusive and all-important value. Yet insofar as the peregrine is concerned, this is exactly the attitude that is being taken and the attitude, too, that government agencies are being put under pressure to take, as is perfectly clear in view of what has happened.

But both for historical and ecological reasons the peregrine does not belong entirely to nature. Its value in this context is neither diminished nor denied by the admission that the peregrine belongs also to individual ownership by man. This relationship is too ancient to refute. By right of history and tradition and by right of the intrinsic behaviour of the species, this bird belongs to man. With an inherent ability to adapt to new situations that transcends ecological boundaries and has proven to permit its complete and final integration with mankind, the peregrine on the glove or flying high above the falconer's head is just as truly and profoundly the Peregrine Falcon as is the one chasing pigeons over Times Square or nesting on some cutbank of an arctic river. The ability and willingness of this species to form a permanent symbiotic partnership with man is fully comparable to that of the horse or dog and quite as ancient.

With an historical right of individual possession extending back in time for somewhat in excess of two thousand years, backed by the recent accomplishments in the techniques of captive propagation, it seems unlikely that falconers even in the Anglo-American countries will lightly relinquish this claim to individual ownership of individual

birds of this species. The pressures from the naturists who deny this claim and "insist" that the species belongs strictly to the ecology may, if continued, succeed in driving falconers and falconry underground - and this indeed seems to be the aim. People of like mind and by similar methods also succeeded, some forty years ago, in driving North American aviculture underground. But falconry, like aviculture, has endured this kind of hostility before and, by its very nature, is eminently suited to endure again, if it must, and still survive. Eventually, as the breeding of domestic birds becomes commonplace, and as the anti-falconry campaign weakens for lack of obvious falconers to campaign against, falconry will surface again. At about this same time, if not sooner, the myth will have outworn its usefulness and it will have been "discovered" that "substantial populations" of peregrines in "more or less wilderness regions" of the world had either "escaped lethal contamination" or "have made a remarkable recovery". The species will be duly recorded as having been "saved" by the "timely intervention" of "concerned scientists and conservationists", and with this face-saving explanation in some pontifical ornithological journal the protectionists will exit with great dignity, to pay thence forth no attention whatsoever to falcons or falconry.

Were I to terminate this paper at this point the entire work, however convincing some of the reasoning and however logical the sequence of events, could still be dismissed, for after all the question will be asked, why should serious scientists go to such apparently fantastic lengths to create, and then promote, a fabrication? The very appearance of irrationality is in itself rather convincing that it is no fabrication. Yet the apparent irrationality is not really irrational at all. It is the kind of approach that is being made to real or "imagined" problems in many areas of modern society, and for a very great diversity of purposes.

The myth of the vanishing peregrine is a means to an end which has been created and promoted under the covering philosophy that it

serves a good cause and that therefore the end justifies the means. The use of mass media technology for the promotion of the stream of propaganda in support of the myth is relatively new but the methodology underlying the myth itself is timeless and subtle. The deep involvement of scientists in such proceedings is post-war, and deserves attention.

Prior to World War II the basic philosophy underlying Anglo-American scientific procedures was the concept of scientific "purity". "Pure" science was a conceptual ideal in which the scientist himself was uncommitted and emotionally uninvolved in his investigations. To as great a degree as possible his investigations were supposed to be undertaken out of curiosity alone, with no fixed goals or objectives. Since World War II, and especially since Hiroshima, this concept has been changed radically. The sense of guilt associated with the perversion of the work of pure scientists had a profound and traumatic effect on scientists and scientific attitudes. American scientists are no longer pure, no longer emotionally non-involved, nor are they expected to be so. The natural sciences have not escaped this latter-day self-examination and reassessment of attitude.

No longer are scientists prepared to work in relative obscurity and to let other aspects of human society make of their research what it will. Nowadays scientists are setting their own objectives, and in no area of modern science is this more profoundly true than in those branches of Natural Science that are concerned with environmental and associated problems. Not the least of the latter are those dealing with zoology, particularly those aspects of the activities of modern man that in one way or another pose a threat to the continued existence of different kinds of wildlife. In dealing with these matters it has come to be the fashion to expect, and even to require emotional commitment and dedication on the part of the scientists involved. However praiseworthy this new attitude may seem, it nevertheless carries with it what are to scientists an entirely new (but really very old) set of

dangers that at once give a totally different aspect to scientific "fact". Scientists deal in fact, and fact and truth are to some degree interchangeable terms, with the "fact" being usually related to the greater "truth". But the moment the fact becomes relative to a preconceived end, that end assumes a dimension of truth which it may, or may not have, and the fact relative to it then attains a most plastic and variable dimension, and can mean almost anything.

It is here at this point that the dangers inherent in involvement become apparent, for when the preconceived goal takes on the aspect of a revealed truth with the "facts" of research being given credence only when they show the "right" things, many modern sciences take on most of the aspects of a cult, or faith. For of necessity the scientist with a preconceived goal must become involved in the techniques of convincing other people of the desirability of his achieving that goal. The need now becomes that of official approval of the objective, and that official approval is most easily attainable through the attainment of public approval. The way to public approval always implies ever deepening involvement in the techniques and methods of manipulating human attitudes. These are well known and are as old as humanity.

The primary requirement for the public promotion of any preconceived objective is that it be presented in such a way as to have the appearance of a "good" objective or "cause" and that the promoter be able to make a convincing case that he himself has nothing to gain by his involvement in the promotion of such a cause. By now the departure is complete and final, for a "good cause" need have very little if anything to do with science, the promotion of such a "good cause" even less so. Yet this is the dubious route that the modern committed scientist has deliberately chosen, this being particularly true of the environmentalist and wildlife protectionist. It is by this same route, taken by choice, that these latter-day "scientists" of environment and nature protectionism have all too quickly become the high priests of a new faith.

For the conservation cause as it is now being promoted has surely entered the category of a faith. It is, in fact, perhaps the greatest new hope for the salvation of mankind and nature that has appeared in Anglo-American culture for over three centuries. In the category of a cause it is probably the greatest and certainly the most altruistic of the many "good causes" that have graced (?) our time. No longer is conservation a means by which mankind can live in harmony with the natural laws that shaped our planet, no longer is conservation research oriented to probing the nature of those laws, no longer is it a flexible ever-changing accommodation to an ever-changing world. This kind of rational conservation is dead - dead and buried, too - buried under a wave of emotionally committed "converts" to the new "cause". In any such emotionally motivated mass movement the need for human thought and attitude control far transcends the need for scientific research. The witch-doctors, the spellbinders, the prophets, the mass media manipulators and opinion makers instinctively take charge, and the latter-day committed scientist finds himself, according to his abilities, either the slave of his monster or the high priest of his cult.

No part of the new conservation cult more deliberately draws public attention to itself and the righteousness of its "cause", or is more concerned with the use of public-opinion making and image-building techniques than that branch which concerns itself with the "saving" of various kinds of wildlife. Certainly no other group of the new 'committed scientists' have so completely and so eagerly taken unto themselves most of the trappings and much of the language of a faith. No group seeks 'converts' more assiduously, promotes its 'message' more pervasively, embarks on 'crusades' more frequently or engages in battles with 'enemies' - real or imagined - more furiously. As befits the foregoing, in perhaps no other branch of modern science do the leaders bear a greater or more studied resemblance to priests and saviours, both in utterance and function, as well as in the total uncritical adulation demanded of their followers. Certainly few others in leadership posit-

ions in the conservation cult can quite compare with these in giving an appearance of complete unselfishness and noble dedication to a flawless and faultless cause. Yet, stripped of the white robes and pontification, what really shows is that we have here in fact a very well established, carefully graded power structure in a highly specialized field, a structure in which a certain elite of high priests are completely omnipotent. From exalted positions they make pronouncements, and the pronouncement carries with it all the overtones of a 'revealed truth'. Anything thus declared "rare" or "endangered" becomes so in the minds of disciples or employees simply because the 'authority' has 'spoken'. Such a pronouncement, of course, is the "endangered" status of the peregrine and the "rarity" of the gyrfalcon; and we have covered the steps by which this kind of pronouncement is made authoritative, and by which it soon has behind it the full weight of legal authority. Thus it is that to question or deny such a pronouncement from within the power structure simply cannot be done: the high priests excommunicate all who try, this being done simply by never referring to anything written or produced by such an individual and relegating him to the category of a non-person in the scientific community. To question from outside the structure as I do here, and as all falconers by implication do also, involves considerable risk. The very questioning is an affront, of course, and warrants vengeance by bringing enforcement agencies to bear if possible, as we have seen; but secondly there is a more subtle implication of evil purpose on the part of the questioner, and it is this latter that is really the more hazardous in the long term of the two.

For in the exalted position of being saviours, these high priests have taken unto themselves the shining raiments of high virtue and great goodness and clothed themselves therein, and it follows that any who question their pronouncements are evil, and any who question their motives are damned. It is here then, deliberately and skilfully manoeuvred into this simplistic primitive level of evil opposed to good, that falconry and falconers are being placed on public exhibit in

relationship to the conservation cause. There is the reason for the myth of the vanishing peregrine. It is a good myth, and it has served its end exceeding well.

In the background, behind the spotlighted stage drama where the white knights bravely battle black evildoers, the real manoeuvring for power proceeds. At stake is the matter of regional as opposed to international administrative authority relative to the birds of prey of at least one continent and one subcontinent. The myth of the vanishing peregrine is the political wedge by which the high priests of the protectionist cause are attempting to obtain the advisory control, with its implied legislative control of these birds, over most of Europe and all of North America. To accomplish this, regional administrations must be convinced that it is to their interest to abrogate all regional administrative claims to these birds. As falconers are the only people who make use of the birds of prey and to whom, therefore, they are of any value, the real reason for the stage-play becomes clear. It is to denigrate and delegitimatize falconers that this act has been put on, to make them appear debased and evil; to make falconry appear totally out of its time and place without a single redeeming feature, and in doing this to attain the illegality of falconry at the local level. Once so banned at any regional level there is no further point in a local or regional administration retaining administrative authority. It is this piecemeal attrition of local authority that leads inevitably to the pre-emption of that same authority on a larger scale. In relation to this motive every move so far made makes very real sense indeed.

The development of falconry within the same regional administrative boundaries as currently control the human utilization of upland game birds, waterfowl, the large game animals and the fur-bearers, could quickly become of considerable importance to many regional administrations and a really significant revenue source to some, particularly those of some Canadian provinces, the Canadian Territories, and Alaska. The utilization of certain species of the birds of prey, both as a rec-

reational resource and as a renewable resource of monetary value, fits perfectly within the framework of the concept of regional renewable resource management principles. To the extent that any regional administration has permitted its enforcement personnel to become involved in a witch hunt due to the machinations of an elite handful of high-status protectionists, that administration has been made the victim of a sophisticated confidence game. To the extent that any Canadian administration has been involved it has been doubly victimized, for any significant declines in peregrine falcons (and this is what it has allegedly been all about) on this continent have been in the United States and not in Canada. Canadian peregrines need protection from falconers to just about the same degree that Canada geese need protection from shotguns.

At Madison it became clear to the cause promoters that North American falconry had developed in what was virtually an administrative vacuum, and had very nearly escaped the attention of local administrations. There is nothing in the past history of these that would indicate other than that, had they been permitted to function without outside interference, they would by now have handled the new development quietly and with reasonable efficiency, and in most cases with the help and cooperation of the falconers themselves. By using the subversive tactics outlined here this has not been permitted: the cultists' cause has been intruded; hostility, suspicion, embarrassment, publicity and ridicule have been the tools; the methods are those of international communism, the results the same - confusion and chaos as a prelude to the pre-emption of power.

The world has had a surfeit of causes and cults; and the spectacle of degree-holding scientists deliberately casting themselves as the new saviours, with questionable motives and for a doubtful cause (as what cause is not doubtful?), is disquieting and offensive. Propaganda notwithstanding, falconry is neither cult nor cause. At best it is an intensely emotive personal experience, an intimate symbiotic rel-

ationship with an entirely different form of life for the achievement of a common purpose. At worst it is mere pet-keeping. In either case there is no aspect of falconry, not even the highly publicized and emotive 'pillaging' of aeries for young birds, that does not fit perfectly well within proven and intelligently and honestly interpreted conservation practices.

And if therefore the falconer is not quite the black and evil devil that he has been made to appear, neither is he a saint - but then he, at least, has never aspired to be one.

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